



The Virginia Saltwater Review

Plans and Statistics Department
2600 Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor
Newport News, VA 23607-0756
<http://www.mrc.virginia.gov>

Vol. 23, No. 15
August 14, 2009

by

Department of Plans and Statistics, Fisheries Management Division

OVERVIEW

The flounder action continues to be HOT in the lower bay this week, especially at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel where multiple citations were reported. Several Saltwater Review partners suggest that this has been one of the best fishing weeks all summer! Along with flounder, sheepshead, and spadefish, some triggerfish were also reported. Spanish mackerel continues to keep anglers busy in the area, and a few offshore anglers were rewarded with blueline tilefish citations last week.

THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

Donna at Captain Bob's reports that croaker in the 15-inch range have arrived in the area. They have been caught at marker 17 in the Canal, and the action is really hot with 13- to 15-inch fish at the north side of Queen's Sound. Kingfish have also shown up, particularly outside of the inlet. It has been a good week for flounder, with two or three dozen fish caught at the Chincoteague Channel, near Daisy's Dockside, and the Black Narrows Marsh. A few nine-pounders were found at the Subway Cars at Blackfish Banks where anglers were also maxing out on spadefish and black sea bass. A huge mako shark (220 pounds) was brought in from the Norfolk Canyon, where most of the offshore action is located.

Onancock

According to Captain Wil, fishing is slow in Onancock. Croaker are around but small this week. Large croaker have been showing up after midnight for anglers that are speckled trout fishing at the local islands. The flounder catch has been very slow.

Wachapreague

At the Wachapreague Marina, staff reported numerous croaker with a few keeper flounder mixed in. Offshore has been slow except for the Wrecks where flounder, black sea bass, and triggerfish were found.

Nice flounder and croaker were caught near Bulls Head, in Dawson's Shoals, and at both sides of the Wachapreague Inlet, according to staff at Captain Zeds. Croaker have been concentrated in Green Channel and in the waters across from the Coast Guard Station. There has been good clamming and crabbing in the area as well.

Cape Charles

At Chris' Bait and Tackle, croaker were reported near Buoy 262 and Oyster. Flounder catches were reported at the high-rise of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and buoys 36A and 42. Cut bait, minnows, and squid attracted the most catches. Cobia hookups were scattered between buoys 16 and 13, and red drum were caught in the same area by anglers fishing with bunker and peelers. Small black drum, sheepshead, and spadefish were reported from the 4th island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Captain Ray Cardone, out of Cherrystone, reported a nice flounder bite over the past few days. Several keepers were caught, and the largest was 22 inches. Trout and croaker are also biting, along with small blacktip shark and cobia.

Lower Bay/Bridge Tunnel

Several flounder citations were reported at Cobb's Marina last week including a 9-pound, 8-ounce fish caught at the 4th island and a 9-pound, 5-ounce fish caught at the 1st island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Overall, the flounder and cobia action has been good, with spot and croaker catches reported as well.

At the Sunset Boating Center, two large flounder were caught at the Hampton Bar lately. Other than flounder, there has been little activity.

Staff at Salt Ponds Marina reported two blueline tilefish citations (13 pounds, 4 ounces, and 11 pounds, 3 ounces). Both were hooked on the 12th at the Norfolk Canyon. Inshore, the flounder bite was good at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and one group reported 4 citations in two days.

Several flounder citations in the 7-pound range were reported from the York River Fishing Center. Several were caught at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and one was reported from Cape Charles. At 9-Foot Shoal, a 70-pound, 8-ounce citation cobia was caught. Overall, it was a good week for flounder fishing, which has finally picked up at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Spanish mackerel, flounder, and cobia were at the mouth of the York River, and croaker and spot were found in the rivers. This is reportedly the best fishing week of the summer thus far.

Ken Neill, of the Peninsula Anglers Club and IGFA representative, contributed the following:

There is a lot of great fishing going on right now. This has got to be one of the best cobia seasons we

have ever had in both numbers of fish and the numbers of large fish catches. Fish are being caught on chum slicks, by running the buoys, and just cruising around in open waters and casting to fish. Anglers slow-trolling live baits off of Sandbridge were rewarded with some large king mackerel and even some tarpon this week. Spanish mackerel fishing is very good from the Chesapeake Light Tower and up into the bay. Sizes are good with fish ranging from 16- to 24-inches long on average. Decent numbers of sheepshead are being caught at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. The flounder bite along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel is nothing short of fantastic. Fish are being caught from the 1st island to the high-rise, and they are running large. A number of flatfish over 10 pounds have been caught this week. Amberjack fishing at the South Tower is just crazy. The billfish bite off of Virginia is heating back up just in time for the Virginia Beach Billfish Tournament next week.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

Decent weather is providing anglers with some good opportunities lately. The ongoing flounder explosion is still the main attraction inshore. Since the summer's sluggish flounder spell turned around last weekend, anglers are rushing to get in on the bite. Dozens of whoppers up to 12 pounds are hitting the scales. Huge doormats are striking at jigs and live bait presented along varying bottom structures in the lower part of the bay. The Cell, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel structure, and lower bay wrecks are just a few of the best flounder hot-spots lately. Drifters are also having good luck with strip baits and minnows near Buoy 36A and the Thimble Shoal Channel near Cape Henry.

The next top species is cobia. Cobia are transitioning to their usual late summer trend of top-water rendezvous with structure. This movement is providing a new approach for many cobia hunters. More fish are also beginning to cruise on the surface. In the meantime, chummers are still enjoying a nice selection of big fish taken on cut bait and eels.

Red drum are still roaming around most of the lower bay, especially near shoals and the 3rd and 4th islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Black drum are also still meandering around the artificial islands of the Bridge Tunnel where folks are hooking and releasing a few fish on artificial lures. Expect the blacks to begin moving off the islands soon.

King mackerel are beginning to show promise. Sighting of schools of kings, along with a few landings of snake-sized fish, is bringing hope that the fishery will light up soon. A good easterly blow could jump start the king bite.

According to local charter captains, the Spanish mackerel fishing along the coastal Virginia Beach is hit-and-miss right now. Plenty of taylor bluefish are taking up the slack.

With the large number of sharks showing in local waters, these toothy critters are becoming a targeted species lately. Several varieties of sharks such as sand tigers, tigers, hammerheads, blacktips, and spinners are sniffing out chum slicks all over coastal and lower Bay waters. Some of these fish are pushing to over 8 feet.

The great puppy drum (juvenile red drum) action is still going on within most any skinny water location in Tidewater, with steady action within Lynnhaven and Rudee inlets. These young reds will hit a variety

of baits, with fresh cut mullet and Gulp mullets the top choices lately.

Interest in spadefish is waning, but some decent sized fish are still available along the northern span of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, the four artificial islands, and many inshore structures. Sheepshead are cooperating lately. Crab, clam, and fiddlers presented along the pilings and tubes of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel can entice a sheepshead bite. Triggerfish are everywhere on lower bay structures and inshore wrecks. These little fish will take most any offering.

Croaker are everywhere, and the bigger hardheads are now moving into lower bay waters. The larger fish are coming from the deeper areas north of the 3rd island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, the Monitor Merrimac Bridge Tunnel, Back River Reef, and the Cell. Many fish are ranging from 1 to 1.5 pounds. Anglers fishing Oyster are also still filling coolers in the backwaters. Spot are hitting within Rudee and Lynnhaven inlets on bloodworms, with good numbers of fish still coming from off the concrete ships.

The rekindled tarpon action on the Eastern Shore is still holding this week. According to the folks at Chris' Bait and Tackle, with a few fish jumping off this week and many sightings, the silver king hunters are content right now. A few more hot days are needed to maintain this pattern. It is rumored that tarpon are also frequenting the coastline near Sandbridge recently.

Amberjack are providing good opportunities on offshore wrecks and at the Southern Towers. With the slow offshore action lately, many bluewater trollers are hitting the South Tower. Some boats are even bringing AJ's home to try. Tuna are scarce, and there are few dolphin around. Scattered white marlin are available further south.

Virginia Middle Bay

Roger, with Jett's Marina, reports that bluefish and small Spanish mackerel are around. Trolling metal spoons is the best bet to find them, and anglers should troll a little quicker to concentrate on the Spanish mackerel action.

Butch, out of Garrets Marina, reports a few people are finding two-pound croakers. Best bet for them is in deeper water with the water temps being so warm.

Captain Jim Thompson reports that spot and croaker are around in the deeper water of river mouths and artificial reefs. These critters will be getting bigger in size as time goes on. Flounder are throwbacks for the most part, but there are a few keepers. Spanish mackerel and bluefish are working at the mouth of the Rappahanock and Piankatank rivers.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

Bay surface temps are above 80 degrees, and Spanish mackerel fishing has been good. Good catches continue to be made off Stingray Light, along Windmill Bar, and along the bar edge up into Fleets Bay. They are also available along the Tug Boat Channel from Milford Haven 1 south to Wolftrap Light.

The creeks and rivers are producing keeper spot and croaker, and #2 spot are available off Gwynn's Island, at the Spike (3R), and up the Rappahannock River around Buoy 8. Large croaker have become harder to find in the rivers and are schooling in the open bay.

Flounder fishing has turned red hot at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and has improved somewhat at Buoy 42 and the Cell area. There are keeper flounder being caught in the Rappahannock around Buoy 8 and along the southern shores of Mathews County as far down as New Point Comfort Light. The Gloucester Pier has produced some keeper flounder in the evening under lights. Three citation flounder were registered this week, which were the best results this year.

Speckled trout and puppy drum are available in waters over hard bottom and over grass beds. Several limits of keeper speckled trout have been caught in the waters around Gwynn's Island. Peelers are working very well as are live bunker caught by cast net.

Cobia are biting well at York Spit and have been active just south of Newpoint Light. Menhaden chum, combined with live eels, is the bait of choice.

Virginia Beach

Staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center report spot, bluefish, croaker, and flounder in the inlet, and cobia, shark, bluefish, and Spanish mackerel in the inshore waters. There were also a few spadefish and triggerfish at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Offshore, catches consisted mainly of amberjack and white and blue marlin. Some swordfish action was also reported, and a few yellowfin tuna were spotted as well.

Virginia Piers

At the Ocean View Pier, anglers hooked spot and croaker this week. The action for both has been very nice with slowly increasing sizes of both.

Spot, sea mullet, a few croaker, and blue crab were reported from the Lynnhaven Pier this week.

Fishing was pretty slow at the Virginia Beach Pier last week; however, Spanish mackerel, bluefish, spot, and large sea mullet were landed when conditions were favorable. Crabbing continues to be productive as well.

At the Buckroe Fishing Pier, anglers reported catches of spot, small flounder, and a few bluefish last week.

Outer Banks, NC

Offshore fishing out of Oregon Inlet continues to be dominated by dolphin. Some wahoo, king mackerel, bonito, and tuna were also in the mix. Deep droppers were able to find some blueline tilefish. The billfish catch still is better than average for this time of year for all three species. Striped bass and red drum were available at the 12- to 15-mile range. Artificial reefs were providing triggerfish, sheepshead, tautog, black sea bass, and spadefish. Nearshore fishing was slow with the Spanish mackerel and bluefish moving inside the

inlet. Pier and surf fishing was dominated by spot, croaker, and sea mullet. Other summer denizens including speckled trout, weakfish, flounder, red drum, pompano, and puffers were caught, but not in very high numbers. Along with the Spanish and bluefish inside the inlet, speckled trout, flounder, and sheepshead were in their old haunts.

South of Oregon Inlet, small puppy drum could be found at the Point. Spot, croaker, and sea mullet were in the wash along the beaches with Ramp 43 being popular due to accessibility.

At Hatteras Inlet, boats were limited in the time they could fish due to bad weather, but when they could get out, dolphins were keeping the anglers very happy. Wahoo, king mackerel, and yellowfin tuna were around as well. White marlin and sailfish release flags were flying on a few of the boats. Inshore fishing was producing speckled trout and bluefish when the weather allowed.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.








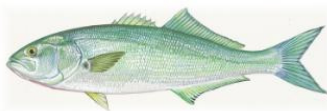
ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM
			
TAUTOG	KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
			

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)**



ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

Get Hooked! Report at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

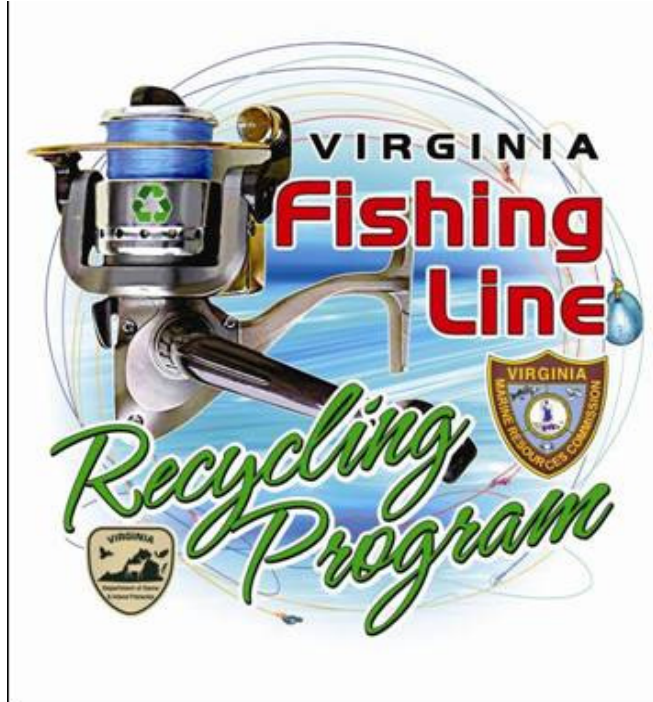
This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

A screenshot of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's "Recreational Fishing Online Reporting" website. The page has a blue header with the commission's name and logo. Below the header, there's a section titled "Recreational Saltwater Fishing" with a "Welcome Jgrist," message. A prominent message states "Red Drum Reports are Needed!" and explains that they are collecting length data from red drum caught-and-release for a stock assessment. Another section titled "New 2008 Tautog Regs" lists the closed season (May 1 through June 24), minimum size limit (14 inches), and possession limit (4 per person). A statistics box on the left shows data for June 16, 2008: 1,457 members, 295 trips, and 3,941 catches. At the bottom, there are "Related Links" and a "Feedback" section.

Introducing the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

- Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for:
 - fish
 - birds
 - marine mammals
 - boaters and swimmers
- Deposit used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers!

VMRC-Managed



Locations!*

Ocean View Fishing Pier, Norfolk

Long Bay Pointe Marina, Virginia Beach

Buckroe Fishing Pier, Hampton

Chris' Bait and Tackle, Cape Charles

Capt. Bob's Marina, Chincoteague



*DGIF manages other locations throughout Virginia

The Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program is run jointly by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with support from the Boat US Foundation.

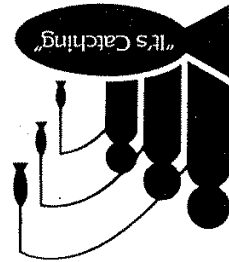
If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new container locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or email

alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov.



FIRST CLASS MAIL

TAKE A FRIEND FISHING



FISHERIES PLANS/STATISTICS OFFICE
VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
2600 WASHINGTON AVE., 3RD FLOOR
NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23607

Practice

CAREFUL CATCH

REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water